

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING TIMES



No:
148

FREE

TIMES

AUGUST 1996

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Back In Business

After a string of pub closures in Stockport in recent months, a sudden flurry of activity has seen most of them back in business.

On Hillgate, the **Crown** reopened on 4th July under the capable hands of Alan Roebuck. While this is Alan's first pub, he has plenty of experience - his parents kept the Flying Dutchman for 20 years and mum Maureen was a familiar face behind the bar of the Grapes in Edgeley for many years. The Crown is now in the throes of a much needed redecoration. Work has been completed on the vault which is now brighter and more welcoming than it has been for many years and it is intended to move the dartboard into the back room to leave the vault for the drinkers.

Alan is very keen on his darts and in his time he was the youngest ever captain of the Cheshire Youth Team. Recently his interest has been rekindled so the Crown could well become one of the town's major darts pubs in the years to come. Not that trade is slack at the moment; the few weeks since opening have seen trade soar with many of the old locals coming back. They'll have plenty of good beer to enjoy, too. Alan's brother Kevin is in charge of the cellar, and keeps a fine drop of Wards Bitter, Vaux Mild and Samson, all on handpump. After a few years in the doldrums, the Crown looks like it's going places once again. Certainly worth a visit.

Further down Hillgate, the **Gladstone** was set to reopen on August 16th, as we went to press. New faces behind the bar will be Paul Cunningham and his girlfriend Alex Marshall. Hailing from Heaton Chapel, Paul and Alex have been after a pub for five years, during which time they have been getting as much bar work experience as they can.

The good news is that no changes are planned as Paul is very alert to how good a pub the Gladstone is - it is virtually unchanged since its rebuilding in the 1930's. Real ale from Burtonwood will be on sale and Paul is very much open to suggestions as to which ones he should sell. Entertainment will take the form of live Country & Western or Irish Music and he is hoping that the brewery will help him introduce some form of lunchtime food operation. Another welcome return to the local pub scene.



Kevin (left) and Alan Roebuck, new faces at the Crown, Hillgate

Other re-openings include the **Midland** on Wellington Road North which has now become **Dillons Whistlin' Jig**. This, if you hadn't guessed is an Irish theme pub. It's quite nicely done out inside but sadly sells not a drop of real ale. Keg Boddingtons is £1.60 a pint and Guinness is two quid. With the Magnet up the road selling Holts at just over a pound, it's difficult to see where Dillons expects to get its custom from at these prices. Also back to life, if that's the word, is **Upstairs Downstairs** in Mersey Square. When OT called it was devoid of both real ale and customers, much as it was before. In Edgeley the **Pineapple** is back to life and looks smarter than it has done for years, but sadly this is yet another major improvement spoilt by a lack of real ale.

Of the two other town centre closures, the **Stanley Arms** looks to have gone for good as we understand that it is to become a carpet shop. Not so with **Byrons** on Great Portwood Street, where there could be some very interesting developments in the next few weeks. More news on this as it breaks.

Tetley Take-over Close

Bass's bid for the Allied Domeq half of Carlsberg-Tetley breweries is now official (as of Monday 29 July). Teams at both companies are working on details - believed to be more to do with how to avoid a reference to the Monopolies and Merger Commission than the price. A buy out of the Carlsberg stake (50%) would follow.

The announcement led to immediate share rises in the City, in the belief that significant savings will result from 'rationalisation'. And from bitter experience we know EXACTLY what this means. CAMRA will oppose the buy-out and subsequent brewery closures with every means at our disposal.

A weakening of prices in the pub group sector as a whole has left Tim Martin's Wetherspoon group looking increasingly vulnerable. Watch out for a bid soon. It looks like the pace of amalgamations, mergers and closures is starting to increase.

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PAGES ON: <http://www.u-net.com/camramcr/>
(The New Look Opening Times pages will be launched on Aug 21)

CAMRA HQ WORLD WIDE WEB

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IN THE EDITOR'S VIEW..

Over the years we have reported a continual stream of pub closures in Manchester, mainly to the east of the city. Stockport had seemed largely immune from this trend until the start of this year when a rash of closures hit the town. So marked was this that the Stockport Express Advertiser was moved to run a feature on the subject. Further ammunition to the Jeremiahs who predict the remorseless decline of the great British pub.

How good it is to report then, as we do this month, that most of these closed pubs have bounced back with only one permanent loss, the Stanley Arms. Indeed, only one pub now remains closed and Byrons could have a very interesting new owner before long, we hear. True, too many of the re-opened pubs don't serve real ale but at least they are open and could see the error of their ways in due course. Closed down, they wouldn't be selling anything.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of the death of the British pub are clearly premature.

★ ★ ★ ★

Readers of Pub News will see that Banks's are putting two of their earlier Manchester purchases back on the market. If truth be told, apart from one or two flagship outlets, Banks's foray into the North West has been less than impressive. In too many cases they have seemed like a child with a new toy, excited until the novelty wears off. Indeed, in general Banks's do seem to be a company that has taken its eye off the ball, certainly as far as their local pubs go. We hope to carry out a survey of our own later in the year to see how they are performing in the OT area. It should make interesting reading.

★ ★ ★ ★

Due to annual holidays - yes, even the OT team go away! - the next issue will be edited by our Production supremo, Paul Hutchings, so please send anything for the next issue direct to him at 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport SK4 2NP, or (0161) 432 8384, or (how many more?) via the internet at the usual address (jclarke@opentime.u-net.com).

John Clarke

Independents' Day Treasure Hunt

The fourth annual Independents' Day Treasure Hunt took place on Saturday 6th July around Manchester City Centre pubs selling Independent Brewers' beers. Fourteen teams started off from the Beer House trying to find clues in pubs deciphered from a wordsearch.

A number of teams, notably "The Tigers of Wrath" gloriously led by Rhys Jones and John Hutchinson, went slightly astray searching for clues in the "CRONW AND ANCHOR" (one of a few red herrings). Twelve teams managed to return to the Beer House for the results and supper. This year's winners of the shield (and a gallon of beer) were Dave and Carol Sheldon, the "Wobbly Bob Team" from Cheadle Hulme, CAMRA members from Stockport & South Manchester. Dave and Carol now have the pleasure of setting next year's event.

Congratulations to all the participants and a big thank-you to Idy Phillips and Graham Rawlinson at the Beer House for hospitality and refreshments. "The Tigers of Wrath" finished in a very creditable 12th place, but a good time was had by all.

IO.

Drink-Drive Threat To Pubs

- Peter Edwardson takes a dispassionate look at the issues

Thousands of pubs throughout the country would be threatened if proposals to slash the legal drink-drive limit became law.

The current law, setting a maximum level of 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood, took effect in 1967. Since then, this limit has become generally understood and accepted, and in recent years there has been a dramatic fall in drink-related deaths on the road. But the British Medical association - and others - have now called for the legal limit to be cut from 80 mg to 50 mg, in effect reducing the maximum amount you can legally drink before driving from about two pints of ordinary strength beer to one.

The road safety case for this is very much unproven - many studies have shown that the real danger on the roads is not people driving while below the current limit, but an unregenerate hard-core minority who blatantly ignore it. This proposal alone will do nothing to deter these offenders. What it will do is to cause law-abiding folk to question whether it is worth going to the pub at all. Many people, for example, legally enjoy a couple of pints on the way home from work, or before Sunday lunch - but if the limit was cut, would they bother for one?

Many pubs in suburban and rural areas would be put at risk. Even if some classic country pubs managed to survive, it could well be at the cost of losing their character and turning themselves effectively into restaurants. In the long term, the effect of this move would be to ensure that the British pub as we know it survived only in town centres and densely packed urban areas.

For those living in the country, or on a suburban estate, drinking beer legally in the pub would become a very occasional treat. There would undoubtedly be an upsurge in the take-home trade at the expense of pubs. And there is a distinct possibility that the law would be brought into disrepute, with formerly law-abiding people taking the view that they might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.

The drink-drive issue has for long been an easy target for lobby groups opposed to pubs and alcohol in general, and they have missed no opportunity to exploit it. No responsible person defends the right to drive when drunk, or has any sympathy for those who do. But it has become all too easy to brand anyone who argues in favour of a sense of proportion on the issue as an apologist for drunken killers.

Surely, though, the time has come now to say clearly and without apology that further tightening of an already strict law will do little or nothing to help road safety, and may even make it worse, but will undoubtedly endanger the future of thousands of pubs, and consign millions living in suburban or rural areas to a kind of halfway house to Prohibition.

The government have so far rejected these calls, and it is unlikely that any legislation will be passed before the next General Election. However, the pressure for change is certainly not going to go away, so enjoy those pubs while you can, because they may not be there in ten year's time.



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Pub Of The Month AUGUST



The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month award for August 1996 goes to the Crown, High Street, Cheadle.

Up until recently you could have been forgiven for going straight past the Crown without noticing it; the narrow shop front appearance didn't exactly draw your attention to the fact that it was a pub. And its interior wasn't exactly inspirational: a single level reverse 'L' shaped room of little adaptability.

However that was before new licensees Philip Ridyard and Bonnie Lee went into partnership with Hydes Anvil Brewery and worked wonders with a refurbishment. The new glass frontage makes it plain that this is indeed a pub, and also helps to lighten the slightly gloomy air that the entrance used to have. The unpromising interior has been improved

by the introduction in the entrance of a 'lobby' effect, with a tiled floor, and by the building of a raised seating area. Despite all this, the clientele is generally the same, perhaps a little younger than previously, but still very much made up of the older section of the community.

Bonnie and Philip, with 20 years experience in the trade behind them are also keen on their beer - their previous pub, the Oddfellows in Hyde went from being an also ran into the national Good Beer Guide - and the Crown sells all three of Hydes mainstream beers, Mild, Light and Bitter with the Light being replaced by the seasonal beers when these are available.

Food trade has increased significantly and the famous Cheadle Buskers appear on the first Thursday of each month to an eager and enthusiastic welcome. None of this should be taken to mean that the Crown was less than a decent pub before, but what has happened here is an object lesson in how keen licensees can transform a relative backwater into a thriving mainstream pub without compromising on any of its traditional qualities. This well deserved award will be presented on Thursday, August 29th when friends old and new will all be welcome to join in the fun.

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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Another great Craft Ale from Hydes...

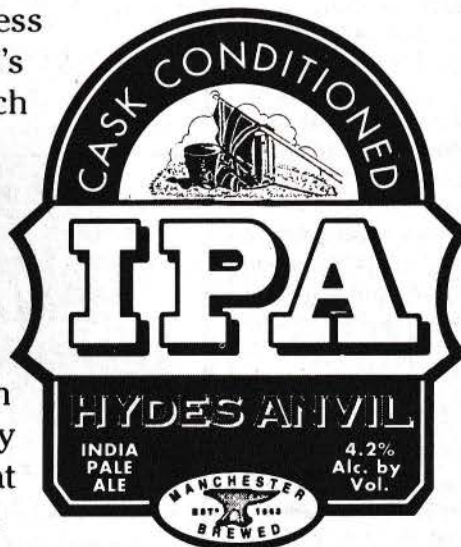
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OPENING TIMES LETTERS

From Peter Bowker, licensee of The Albion, Ashton:

I am writing regarding comments made in your July issue under the heading 'Robinsons in Tameside' about the alterations to the Albion on Penny Meadow.

The small front room referred to in the article has been opened out but curtains have been hung either side of the opened out area so that meetings can still be held in private. The room is still used by the Huddersfield Canal Society and by all the other clubs, unions and societies and as yet no-one has passed any adverse comment. In fact the opposite has been the case with everybody remarking how much more comfortable, nicer looking and airy the pub is.

Considering that we have only just finished carpeting, fitting curtains and upholstering, your representative must have visited and made his judgement halfway through the alteration, surely not the best time to pass an opinion.

The alteration was made for economic reasons because, apart from meetings, the room was hardly used and the Albion lacked any comfortable seating area. With the economics of running a small local becoming tighter every year, we felt the change necessary.

Now that the alterations are complete, I would be grateful if your representative would call again to view the alterations in view of the comments made in this letter.

From Andy Perfect:

I refer to your issue no 147 of Opening Times, dated July 1996, and I would appreciate your acknowledgement of my comments. Throughout your magazine-ette you refer to the antiquated licensing laws and how "pubs need to be based on how people live and work now, not 50 years ago."

Your review of the recently renovated "Albion" pub on Penny Meadow, Ashton-under-Lyne, is, without bias, a unrealistic interpretation of what has actually been achieved, particularly in light of the content of the rest of your issue. Peter and Carol, who run the Albion, have redecorated the pub in extremely good taste, and have retained the authenticity without compromising the space that is available to accommodate the loyal followers of the traditional beers they keep. May I suggest that your contributor "Tim Jones" revisits the pub, perhaps in a better frame of mind and now that the alterations are complete, and samples the pub in its full glory. Either that or he may consider taking off his dark glasses before he reviews the next victim. Perhaps you'd like to contact the Huddersfield Canal Society, among others, and see how the improvements have "affected" their meetings.

Remember, the September edition is being edited by Paul Hutchings, send all material to 8 The Green, Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 2NP by 21 August

via the internet

I'm writing to you to draw your attention to what seems to be a bit of poor service in a pub that I always thought gave good service.

The pub? Some Twitbread theme pub? Irish Bar? Disco bar? No none of these the pub in question is the Boars Head (Samuel Smiths) in Market Place Stockport.

I arrived fairly late in the evening (Tuesday) and the pub was quite quiet. Asking for a pint of "Old Brewery", everything was going OK until I tasted the beer. YUK! A cross between vinegar and stale socks! I asked for another pint and the manager told me "oh yes that one is going off". Your telling me squire! So did he dash downstairs to replace the barrel, pour from another pump or offer an suitable alternative??? Well really none of the above, most SM pubs seem to have stopped stocking "Museum Ale" and so all this chap had left was some tasty "YUM YUM" keg beer.

Turning this "alternative" down I was presented with my money back. Now although that is fine it raises some rather serious points.

1) The manager knew the beer was off (and when I mean off I mean OFF!). 2) After serving a dodgy pint

there was no attempt

to stop further cus-

tomers from buying the

same stuff. (IE turning the

pump sign around etc) 3)

No attempt was made to put

some fresh stuff on (run out?).

4) Less knowledgable custom-

ers will just accept some other

keg alternative. 5) Perhaps it was

late in the evening but why should

I get a lesser standard of service

at the end of the night?

These points are just going

to drive customers away

from what should be a

fairly decent pub. On

the day I just left (like a

good few other customers I imagine) but I guess I

should have "had it out" with the manager. However

after a days work you don't feel like getting into a

"barny" with the landlord.

Oh well you've been warned...

However I can recommend the "CROWN" by the rounda-

bout (down from the George). It has a good selection of real

ales and a good pub to boot.

Have Fun - PS Good beer festival by the way



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STAGGER

with Mark McConachie

We had the ABC crawl (Ardwick, Brunswick and Chorlton-on-Medlock) earlier this year. It was now time for a second acronymous crawl - the BBC. This was an ambitious affair beginning in Beswick, going via Bradford and due to end on Crabtree Lane, Clayton at the Strawberry Duck. Alas that itinerary was over-ambitious, but more of that later...

We began at the **Seven Stars** (Holts) on Ashton Old Road. Essentially a vault and much extended lounge but, also a unique back darts lobby between these two rooms and the toilets. Now in standard Holts decor, the vault remains mostly unchanged since the days of the controversial refurb and extension. I cannot say whether this lounge extension has been a success or not, albeit to say there were a reasonable number of customers in for seven o'clock. Holts Mild and Bitter were on sale; we all tried the mild which was thought to be quite good. A short walk to Mayfair Taverns' **Old House at Home** revealed two handpumps displaying Tetley Bitter. However, requests for two halves resulted in the nitrokeg version being pulled. We made our apologies and left. There was still a long night ahead as we hurriedly passed the boarded-up **Metropole** (another Mayfair Taverns pub) on Rylance Street. We knew, too, to omit another pub on the same street - the **Corner Shop** (Bass), this being keg. Thus direct to Wynne Close and the

Clock Face. Styling itself a Chesters Free House, it is a modern two room affair. We opted for the vault and found the sole beer, Boddies Bitter, to be average and at an above average price of £1.38. That said, the Clock face appears to be well kept and very clean. A trophy cabinet above our heads was full and a well used notice board testified that the pub had a full diary of events.

Wending our way through the back streets and alleyways we came upon the **Townley** (Whitbread) on Albert Street. This is run by the entrepreneurial Lance Turner who previously made successes of other local pubs the Mosley, Britannia and Railway. Lance's skill and energies are now focused on the Townley. A new rear function room has been completed recently and the pub completely redecorated. And it really does look splendid. The function room acts as an overspill area as well as hosting receptions and so forth. The remainder of the pub is one large L-shaped room with clearly designated lounge and sports area, the latter having several shelves bulging with trophies for pool, darts and crib. On the bar were Chesters Mild and Trophy Bitter at £1.32 and £1.05 respectively. Both were sampled, both better than average.

Over to Grey Mare Lane next and another Whitbread pub, the **Queen Victoria**. This pub has had a varied past with a period of closure, a fire, rebirth and even at one time selling five cask beers. What appears to be the remnants of that cask ale past - three unused handpumps behind a grilled bar - greet the visitor. Now beginning to look frayed around the edges, this is an old pub considerably extended. L-shaped bar with snug area, back pool facility, stage with sound equipment set up and large screen TV. It appeared a trifle untidy, although this may have been due to a party or function having just finished. The beer range is down to two now - Holts Bitter at £1.05 and Benthleys Yorkshire Bitter at £1.10. We saw no-one drinking the latter. We concluded the Holts to be a decent example.

We could not sample the **Honeycomb** on Windcroft Close as the John Smiths pub has been boarded up for a while. Still on Grey Mare Lane, Bass's **Crossroads** was our next pub. As on previous visits it was keg. This is also the situation at the Mosley on Ashton Old Road. Sad really, as I can remember when it sold cask Lees and Pedigree. Times change.

A short walk down Rowsley Street brought us to Lees' **Britannia**. The Brit was now sporting the new Lees corporate livery outside; inside was as traditional as ever. Lees Mild and Bitter (£1.06 and £1.10) on the bar; not only good value but both in good nick, too. Two rooms - lounge with pool table and the ever popular L-shaped vault. It seemed a touch quiet on our visit apart from the pub's budgie, Mary. We expected to get more Lees as we headed back to Grey Mare Lane and **Mary D's Beamish Bar**. There was indeed Lees Bitter and Stones on the bar but due to some difficulty in the cellar we could not try either of them. Shame really, as this is a lively place and usually busy.

Over the new ring road now to the remnants of Mill Street and the **'Big' Bradford**. This large Whitbread house is now like two pubs in one - the large left side is 'Hot-shots' pool bar with pop music, flashing lights, video screen and, of course, pool tables. A lone handpump sold Boddies, whilst moving into the traditional right side produced Boddies and Chesters Mild (£1.10) and a more conventional pub feel. The log-end dartboard was in use and there were a good number of people drinking the mild. We joined them and were not disappointed.

We were on the final leg now, only another seven pubs to do! Moving into Clayton, we began at the **Church Inn** on Clayton Lane. This is a small Gibbs Mew (ex-Centric) house offering decent surroundings but, on our visit, fairly lacklustre beer.

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Two beers - Tetley was just average whilst Stones just slightly less so. A quick visit over with we next went in the **Victoria**. Sited on Croft Street, this was a Belhaven house but had now been bought by the tenant. Whilst Tetley beers were still on sale there had been some alterations made. The separate vault was no more and the unique pierced wooden seating had been upholstered, too. This was the busiest pub of the night so far and Tetley Bitter and £1 a pint Falstaff were on sale. We tried the latter and found it better than average. The landlord then showed us another innovation at the pub this time outside in the yard. This had been painted thoroughly and set out with tables and chairs. The big surprise was at the end of the yard - an aviary! And a large one, too. Surely, a first for East Manchester.

The remaining pubs were on Ashton New Road, so off to the **Derby Arms** we trotted (literally, I think). A largish two-room Whitbread house. We went in the vault which some of us found a trifle smoky. The place was quite busy but fairly characterless. Three beers were on sale - the Chesters Mild was reasonable whilst none tried either the Trophy or the Boddies. Halves quickly downed, it was across the road to a loud **Sir Humphrey Chetham**. Loud, because a karaoke was in full swing in the

large rear lounge. We avoided this by going in the front snug. The beer range was identical to the Derby, this time the Trophy was average, the Chesters and the Boddies went unsampled. Time was against us now and we decided to miss out the **Bridge** on Clayton Lane and the **Strawberry Duck**. This meant our final pub was the **Grove Inn**, a small Holts house. Two basic, but busy, rooms make up this popular pub. Opting for the vault we found it alive with the sound of chatter and a background TV; a darts game was also on the go. The Grove provided the perfect end to a hectic night - nothing brash, nothing gaudy, just a plain no-nonsense atmosphere. The beer was good, too; only the mild was tried and by a short margin was the beer of the night.

A most enjoyable but tiring evening. Why not retrace our steps (or part of them) and tell us what you think. A final word to our friends at Stagecoach - where was the last 217 to Piccadilly?

Those Crazy Tykes...

A collective madness seems to be gripping the pub and brewing industry on the other side of the Pennines. Allied Domecq Retail, have surely reached the bottom of the barrel with their naming of the latest "Firkin" outlet in Sheffield. The "Floozy and Firkin" opened last month with the first pint pulled by a scantily clad woman brandishing a whip! House beers include 'Floozy', 'Missionary' and, wait for it, 'Slapper Ale'. Reports that the range is to include imports of the infamous Belgian 'Slag Lager' (yes, really) are unconfirmed (and probably entirely mischievous).

Meanwhile Scarborough drinkers are about to be treated to an ancient Egyptian theme pub. Entrepreneur Joe McLaren has spent £100,000 turning the former Smugglers Rest into 'Kings', so named because of the pub's valley road address. Plans for the opening party had to be changed when Joe failed to book a camel and instead had to settle for a white horse ridden by a member of staff dressed as a pharaoh. The pub's staff will all wear Egyptian dress and among the attractions will be a replica of Tutankhamun's tomb.

A recent visit to Tetley's Brewery Wharf in Leeds also proved much more entertaining than would ever have been thought possible. The Wharf itself is an enjoyable experience but the real find was the optional tour of the brewery for an additional £2. The entertainment was inadvertently provided by the tour guide who came out with such howlers as:

- (1) "Brewing sugar is added to the mash to counteract the bitterness of the hops"
- (2) "The only difference between casks and kegs are the number of holes and that casks are bigger"
- (3) "Dry hopping is the process where hops are added to the cask to create a secondary fermentation"
- (4) "One of the main competitors to Tetley's in Britain is Carlsberg".

Tetley's have spent many millions on the Brewery Wharf. It is a great pity, however, that nothing appears to have been spent on training the brewery guides.

(The real explanations of these items appears on page 15!)

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With John Clarke

This column, in all its various shapes and forms, has generally tended to restrict itself to Stockport and Manchester so a broadening of its horizons was long overdue. When this prospect had been raised in the past, the Boundary invariably cropped up in the conversation. "At least the beer'll be decent", I thought as my train pulled into Guide Bridge station.

"Don't try the Gladiator, it's a bit warm" were Paul's words of greeting as I reached the pub a couple of minutes later. This hoppy brew from the Hadrian brewery is a personal favourite so I chose to ignore his warning...and he was right, the beer was too warm, but perfectly fine apart from this. Settling back I took stock of the pub on this, only my second visit. The first had been a few weeks previously for the pub's second annual beer festival. This is held in a tent erected in the car-park and so on that occasion there was little opportunity to get a good look at the pub.

The Boundary is quite an imposing pub, obviously extended over the years, sited at the junction of Guide Lane, Stockport Road and Audenshaw Road. Once upon a time it was a Wilsons pub and now presumably operates on an Inntrepreneur lease with evidently a pretty loose beer tie. On our visit John Smiths Bitter was on handpump alongside three guests - the aforementioned Gladiator plus Phoenix Brewery Double Dagger and Cotleigh Harrier (which, sadly, had just gone off). There are two rooms - a vault with quite a traditional feel and a strong emphasis on sports and pub games, and a long rambling lounge which also serves as the dining area. It's not perhaps the most characterful of pubs but it is pleasant and comfortable, and you can't ask for much more than that.

The food here has a reputation on two counts - big helpings and small prices and so it proved. The menu is quite extensive including everything from a children's menu, bar snacks, sandwiches, starters, main courses and puddings. And it's certainly cheap - starters include soup at 65p and go up to a princely £1.20 for chicken satay. Wanting to leave room for pud we passed on starters and went for the main event. Prices ranged from £2.20 to £3.90, the exception being £7.50 for a 14oz sirloin steak.

I went for the Chicken Rogan Josh at £3.30 while my two companions chose Cajun Chicken (£3.90) and Boundary Special Pie (£2.90). Prices include chips/jacket/ boiled potatoes and veg or salad.

A brief wait gave us time for more beer - the Gladiator was getting better and the Double Dagger was on fine form. Then the food arrived. Initial impressions were good. Large platefuls of appetising food beckoned. Still, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say, and two of us were certainly not disappointed. The Rogan Josh was spot on and the Cajun Chicken met with similar approval. The Boundary Special Pie proved to be a real let-down, though. The pastry top was OK but the filling was decidedly stodgy and possibly overcooked. Despite our best endeavours, it defeated the three of us.

Time for pud. Again prices were keen ranging from 70p for ice cream to £1.10 for "Zuccotto Bombe", which was an ice cream confection. Only two of us took the plunge, Stuart still having problems digesting his pie. I chose the special - Bread & Butter Pudding with custard while Paul went for Hot Chocolate Fudge Cake with Ice Cream. These were taken from the chilled display cabinet and obviously had an urgent appointment with the microwave. Shortly thereafter they arrived piping hot. The Fudge Cake looked and, apparently, tasted very good indeed. The Bread & Butter Pudding was a stodgy affair, though, and came with a most peculiar pink custard which had a strange consistency and no taste. Another beer all round and we headed home, full and, largely, happy with our meals. How best to sum up the Boundary? It's certainly a good pub and performs very well on the beer front. As to the food, well it's undoubtedly value for money and when it's good it is very good indeed. If this quality was consistent throughout the menu then the Boundary would come highly recommended but, admittedly on the strength of just one visit, there is an inconsistency which deprives it of our highest rating. Worth a visit if you're in the area.

* The Boundary is at 2 Audenshaw Road, Guide Bridge. Tel 0161 330 1679.

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10

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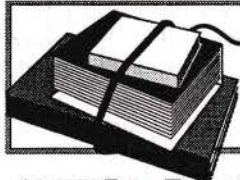


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BOOK REVIEW



"High Quality And a Welcome Familiarity"

To those of us who look forward to Stockport & South Manchester branch's newsletter *Opening Times*, the new guide to Stockport's pubs has a welcome familiarity. Typographically and in design, the new edition of *Viaducts & Vaults* resembles *Opening Times* and the similarity doesn't end there.

The selection of well-written articles on vital topics of which non-CAMRA members are unlikely to have a high level of awareness - nitrokeg, cask mild, real cider, disabled access to pubs - are a pleasing echo of *Opening Times*.

Also reminiscent of the newsletter is the guide's eclecticism: not for editor Rhys Jones a cosy selection of twee little snugs and parlours.

True, there are flatcap-and-whippet pubs, but there's also a half-page picture of the angular, white-tiled Bridge in Heaton Norris, an inter-war pub with nothing Thora Hird-ish about it at all.

Two minor criticisms: the maps are at the back of the book, when they might be more useful in the relevant sections. And there is the reliance common in guidebooks on rows of symbols. I do not accept that symbols help the user. They might help the editor by cutting repetition, but the reader is unlikely to use the book often enough to become familiar with them. It all leads to a of of frenzied page-flipping.

One last thought: Stockport has a suburb called Heaviley. Is that where the CAMRA members live?

(This review by Ted Bruning appeared in What's Brewing, CAMRA's national newspaper)

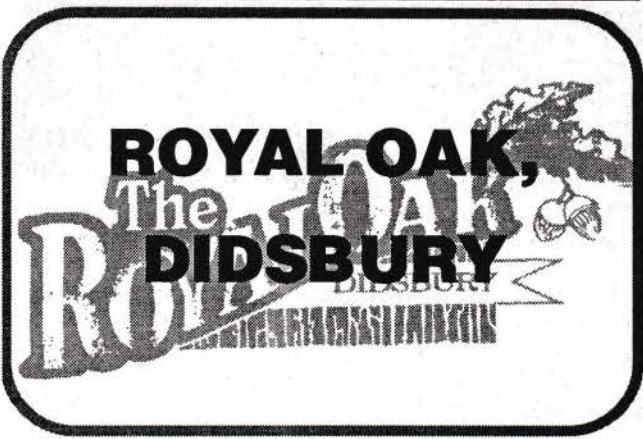
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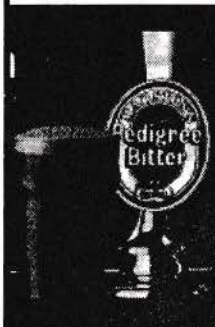


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5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

AUGUST '91

On the front page was a brief, uncompromising message from Marstons to some of their most successful tenants - GET OUT! Aping the bully boy tactics of the national brewers, the Burton-on-Trent based company had issued notices to quit to its top 40 tenants. Three local pubs were affected - the Whitworth In Rusholme had already had a manager installed; at the Royal Oak in Didsbury, long-serving licensee Arthur Gosling had negotiated a 5-year stay of execution to take him up to retirement; but at the Station in Didsbury, the licensee had been given notice to quit, to take effect by June 1992. The fact that the pub had been in the same family for 32 years was ignored by Marstons, as was the apparent unsuitability of the pub to operate as a managed concern - there was no scope for a food operation or installation of slot machines, the usual source of extra revenue for managed pubs.

There had been two interesting developments on the local free house scene:-

1. The Stanley Arms on Newbridge Lane, Stockport, had abolished its uninspiring range of national brewers beers, and they had been replaced by up to 10 guests from small/independent brewers all over the country.
2. Ye Olde Vic in Edgeley had introduced real cider, with a different one every fortnight.

(The current news, of course, is that the Stanley Arms free house is no more, and the Olde Vic is "For Sale".)

There was some advance information on the coming beer festival at Openshaw College, dubbed the Openshaw Octoberfest. Brewer Brendan Dobbin, who was the driving force behind the famous West Coast Brewery, based at the King's Arms, Chorlton-on-Medlock, was going to produce a special one-off beer to celebrate the first Openshaw Beer Festival. Local drinkers had been invited to take part in a "name the beer" competition, by coming up with the most appropriate name. There were some clues available - the festival logo was a locomotive wheel, and Openshaw used to produce locomotives. (John Henson of York turned out to be the winner with "Railhead"). The festival was also to be the venue for the first CAMRA sponsored Manchester Darts Tournament, to take place during each of the festival sessions, with both London and Log End boards in use - and there were to be lots of prizes.

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HIGH PEAK & NORTH EAST CHESHIRE
WITH TIM JONES
CAMPAIGN
FOR REAL ALE 

The main news this month is the opening of the new Wetherspoons in Ashton-u-Lyne. The *Ash Tree* follows the company's pattern in the North West - it's big, beer's cheap and there is no music. See a more detailed review elsewhere in this month's OT.

Following on from last month's issue, Robinsons have confirmed that they have no immediate plans for the refurbishment of the *Hatters* in Marple but plans for the gents are in the pipeline.

The *Cherry Tree* (John Smiths) in Romiley is now selling Holts Bitter at £1.15 a pint (well it is Romiley, you know).


Back over in Tameside, a breath of fresh air wafted into Hyde in the form of new management of the *Sportsman* on Mottram Road. The pub recently went to auction when it was bought by Geoff Oliver (a High Peak branch member from Glossop). The pub was a Whitbread tied house but now proudly boasts no tie at all. The regular beer will be/ is Whim Hartington Bitter and when the pub officially opened, this was accompanied by Cains Mild, Whim High Peak Pale Ale and snow White Wheat Beer (which has recently been replaced by Phoenix Midsummer Madness) all on handpump. This is obviously a welcome change in Hyde and an attempt to revitalise an under-performing pub. The more who visit the better the prospects will be for a good free house being permanent. Needless to say we wish Geoff well in his new venture. In Stalybridge, the *Riverside* (Vaux) has reopened after extensive refurbishment and first impressions are good. More news (ie beer range etc.) at a later date.

More Stalybridge news - the *Stamford Arms*, Huddersfield Road, Heyheads (near the Mossley border) has now introduced the long-promised family garden room and have introduced a children's menu. Arnold and Lynne Bunting always have a least one guest beer available in excellent condition, and often from rare micro-breweries. The *Cherry Tree*, a Marstons house also on Huddersfield Road near the town centre, has re-opened after a period of closure due to poor turnover. There now appears to be a greater emphasis on food.

Back in Hyde, the *Commercial* in Newton - which was reported to have no real ale last month appears to have sorted out the temporary difficulties it was having. It would appear that a loan from Scottish Courage has helped and the pub now boasts Theakstons Bitter, XB and "Commercial Bitter" on handpump.


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The *Red Lion*, Denton (Hydes) no longer sells Dark Mild - only Light and Bitter now.

Back in Stalybridge, the *Buffet Bar* - closed recently - is up for sale. Twelve tenders have been submitted and BR expect a decision by the end of July. In the meantime a lot of the fittings have been auctioned off - a cooler appearing in the Riverside down the road.

And finally...in Disley the *Ram's Head 'Real Ale Bar'* recently had no real ale!

(* Thanks to Geoff Johnson for additional material about Stalybridge)

Tameside News



The region's latest Wetherspoon, the *Ash Tree* in Ashton-under-Lyne, opened on 4th July after an invitation-only preview evening the night before. (Thankfully, Independence Day was celebrated in low-key style, featuring simply promotions on Californian wine, Pete's Wicked Lager, and Alabama Fried Chicken). Situated on Wellington Road near the bottom of Penny Meadow, and handy for both rail and bus stations, it is, unusually for Wetherspoons, a new building. Plentiful and well-captioned local history displays adorn the walls of the one-room but split-level bar, in which separate booths break up the upper-level space; a non-standard but very welcome feature is provided by paintings of scenes in and around Ashton by local artist Liam Spencer.

On the beer front, the expected range of Youngers Scotch Bitter, Theakstons Bitter, and Courage Directors is augmented by Lees Bitter and a guest (Wilt, from Wiltshire's Hop Back Brewery, on opening night); there's also a handpump for Westons First Quality Cider. This writer found the opening night staff much more attentive and organised than at either of the two Wetherspoons in Manchester; time will no doubt tell whether this was an "opening night special" or a real difference between Ashton and Manchester. Regardless of that, the *Ash Tree* is worth a visit. It doesn't aspire to offer the range of beers, or the individual atmosphere, of a place like the *Station*; but its ambience of consistent quality, not to mention its "almost all day" food policy (last food orders are an hour before closing), should win it a secure place in the town's drinking scene.

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ews...Pub
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New owners of the *Kings Head*, Gurnett, Macclesfield, are Mike Newby and John Potts. They had the pub refurbished throughout over one weekend and are now serving excellent food. The pub is open all day, every day and has Draught Bass and Boddingtons Bitter on permanently. There is a guest beer once a week. It is also very handy for the Macclesfield Canal which is just nearby.

The *Stanley Arms*, Bottom of the Oven, Macclesfield Forest, a comfortable rural Marstons pub has new tenants, Adrian Taylor and Caroline Faulkner. They serve Marstons Bitter and Pedigree. Further details of the food range they intend will be announced later. They are open all day Saturday and Sunday.

The *Three Pigeons*, Macclesfield, a Greenalls pub now has a new landlord.

It seems definite that the *Vale*, Bollington has closed forever. A sad loss as this was a regular Good Beer Guide entry and we lost our only outlet for Thwaites Dark Mild.

Both Holt's pubs in Macclesfield, the *Queens* and the *Three Crowns* have had a change of landlord, the licensee of the *Three Crowns* going to the *Queens*.

Cask cider has been added to the already impressive range of guest beers available at the *Waters Green Tavern* in Macclesfield. Currently sold from a plastic ployin kept behind the bar, it is intended that this will be served via handpump in the not too distant future.

13

THE
STATION

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CHESHIRE PUBS

by Peter Edwardson

The Grosvenor Arms, Aldford

by Peter Edwardson.

It's often said that pubs today can't afford to let their trade just tick over, but need to make a special effort in one area or another to attract customers. This is especially true of country pubs with little local trade, which people need to travel some distance to reach. Last year we reported on the Bhurtpore Inn at Aston near Nantwich, which was doing something out of the ordinary on a number of fronts - not least the beer - and was clearly enjoying great success. Recently we were recommended to visit the Grosvenor Arms at Aldford, which falls into a similar category, although with a slightly different emphasis.

Aldford lies about five miles south of Chester on the B5130 which runs along the east bank of the Dee. Part of the Duke of Westminster's Eaton Hall estate, it's a prosperous, attractive village of redbrick Victorian cottages with half-timbered upper storeys. The Grosvenor Arms, standing on the main road just after a dog-leg bend over a small bridge, is an imposing building in much the same style. Now a free house, it's never appeared in any CAMRA pub guides before, and we have no information about its past history, although, like most pubs in the surrounding area, it may well have belonged to Greenalls at some time. Outside, there's a spacious garden to the rear with plenty of wooden tables, an ideal place to sit out on a hot summer's day. Inside, the pub has clearly been thoroughly refurbished fairly recently, making plenty of use of antique furniture and prints, but overall giving a modern and airy impression. Most of the flooring is bare boards with loose carpets, although the entrance lobby boasts black-and-white tiling. To its right is a vault-type area with a bar billiards table, which CAMRA members might well find the most congenial section. The main bar is on the left, running the length of the pub, and beyond this is a further lounge-type room where children are admitted, and a conservatory to the rear. There's no piped music anywhere in the pub.

The regular beers appear to be Flowers IPA and Boddingtons Bitter, suggesting a partial tie with Whitbread, but the pub also offers a varying range of guest beers from independent breweries, including micros. On our visit there were Coach House, Buckleys and Smiles Best Bitters - those we tried, served in sturdy conical glasses, were all on fine form. Prices were in the £1.50 to £1.60 range - not cheap, but not unreasonable for the location. There are happy hours early evenings during the week. A blackboard advertised forthcoming beers, while others detailed the selection of wine and malt whisky, each indicating that the pub took a serious interest in the subject.

The food was equally impressive, with a comprehensive and apparently largely home-made menu ranging from snacks to a wide choice of main meals, with most main courses around £6-£7. Our meals were very attractively presented with new potatoes - often not available in pubs - and a selection of crisp vegetables in a separate dish. The pub serves food right through from noon to 9pm on Sundays and, I would imagine, every session during the week. Sunday lunchtimes can sometimes give a misleading impression of a pub, but on our visit the average age of the clientele was surprisingly young, and they mostly seemed to be young professional people from Chester rather than the "county set".



If your ideal country pub is a down-to-earth rustic alehouse, then the Grosvenor Arms may not appeal. But it's undoubtedly an attractive, confident, stylish and successful pub which is run with a great deal of care and attention to detail, and sets high standards of of, drink and ambience. Most importantly, where many other places with similar ambitions might settle for a solitary handpump and a Caffreys dispenser, it gives beer the prominence it rightfully deserves. These qualities will surely see it before too long making an appearance in both the Good Beer Guide and the Good Pub Food Guide.

Wood's Walks... and other news

Following recent success with a sponsored walk, the Travellers Call at Lane Ends, Marple, have formed a walking society. Known as Travellers Walking & Trekking Society (*or, for short, TWA* **...*oh, surely not - ed.*), and an organised walk is arranged each Sunday. Anyone wishing to join can contact Jack Handford at the pub, or the landlord for details (0161 427 4169). An integral part of the walk is a visit to a pub en-route, finishing off back at the Travellers. Glossop Real Ale Walkers of course are still going strong and High Peak Branch still continue with regular rambles at around six week intervals. Contact Frank Wood on 01457 865426 for details.

On a recent visit at the end of June, it was with dismay that we learnt the Whitegates in Hyde no longer sells cask Sam Smiths OBB. Although the handpumps are still on the bar, they are shortly to be taken out according to the landlord who commented that he thought his keg beer was "nice and smooth". The Whitegates was a CAMRA Investments free house many years ago - how sad that it should have come to this. The Duke of York at Flag, just outside the High Peak branch area is currently shut and up for sale.

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Must Try Harder

Since they opened, the two Wetherspoon's pubs in Manchester have come in for quite a lot of criticism in the pages of "OT", most of it, in my experience, justified at least to some extent. Yet surely the problem with Wetherspoon's is that they're aiming to do many of the right things, but often falling some way short of perfection. There are plenty of places which are infinitely worse - the two bars in Stockport's Grand Central complex, for example - but which haven't attracted anything like the same amount of flak, because we just take it for granted that they have no redeeming features.

After all, a pub chain which offers a range of real ales, permanently low prices, rotating guest beers, regular beer festivals, disabled access and no piped music, is doing most of the things CAMRA campaigns for. There's room for improvement, certainly, but basically they're on the right lines. The number of people using their pubs clearly shows there's a big demand for city-centre drinking in a quiet, comfortable and non-threatening atmosphere.

If they improved the training of their staff, did something to liven up their regular range of beers (perhaps by striking deals with regional independents) and put in some more bench-type seating to break up the large open spaces, there'd be very little to grumble about.

Spotting the Danger

Until now, beer-spotting has seemed a fairly harmless (although occasionally irritating) hobby, which gives a few social inadequates an aim in life. But there's a risk that, if pubs pander too much to the spotters, they will end up alienating the majority of drinkers. Real ale is something to be enjoyed every day, not an obscure specialist interest. Most pub customers, I'm sure, prefer to see on the bar

something they might have tasted, or at least heard of before, or if they haven't, something they might have the chance to try again if they like it.

When recently on holiday in Devon, I went in a free house where the choice of real ales was a national brand and some weird and sickly seasonal beer from Batemans (that well-known West Country brewery from Lincolnshire). No doubt the licensee felt he was doing drinkers a favour, but wouldn't most people have been happier to see a brew from one of the excellent local micros like Cotleigh or Exmoor, or even one of Batemans' regular beers such as XB or Valiant? You can hardly blame the locals for sticking to keg bitter with a lemonade top.

The Real Ale Fitness Plan

A passionate interest in real ale doesn't immediately spring to mind as an element of a "healthy" lifestyle. Yet the saving grace for the fitness of the dedicated imbiber is often the fact that his hobby is not one that can be responsibly pursued from behind the wheel of a car. Even making full use of public transport, they end up walking long distances in pursuit of the amber nectar, thus getting plenty of the sustained aerobic exercise that is supposed to be so good for you. I've come across a number of people who don't remotely resemble members of the Gladiators, and yet can set a cracking pace for miles, which would leave many self-styled sportsmen gasping in their wake. There is far more to fitness than a single stereotype.

Tetley Truths (answers to howlers on page 7)

- 1 Brewing Sugar - added as a cheap ingredient to increase the amount of fermentable materials. A common practice, but 100% malted barley is better.
- 2 Casks/kegs. Casks are for living real ale (cask-conditioned bitter) kegs are for pressurized and dead (keg) beer. Both are available in a range of sizes (though most kegs are 100 litres).
- 3 Dry hopping. Hops added after fermentation, often to the cask itself to increase bitterness and aromas.
- 4 Carlsberg is in fact a 50% partner in the Tetley Brewery!



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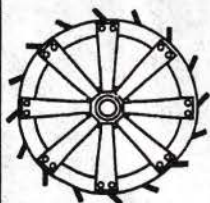
Five guest beers at any time including



changed fortnightly

Food available 12 - 9 every day

Quiz Nights Tuesday and Thursday



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Mon - Sat,
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Mill Lane, Cheadle Hulme
Tel: 0161 488 4090

Claire and Howard wish all their friends and customers a warm welcome at



KENNEDY STREET

MANCHESTER'S

1st FESTIVAL ALE HOUSE

9 HANDPUMPS - 6 GUEST ALES

FOOD 11.30-2.30 & 5-7 Mon-Fri

and 11.30 - 2.30 Saturday

CONSTANTLY CHANGING RANGE OF HIGHEST QUALITY GUEST ALES

CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries

Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak and Macclesfield. Members of all branches are welcome at each other's events!

Diary

August 96

Monday 5th - Two-way social in Edgeley: 9.00pm Gardeners Arms, Northgate Road; 10.00 Bulkeley Arms, Brinksway.

Thursday 8th - Monthly branch meeting at the Florist, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Starts 8.00pm.

Monday 12th - All Saints Social: 9.00 Flea & Firkin, Oxford Rd/Grosvenor St; 10.00 Sand Bar, Grosvenor St.

Friday 16th - Didsbury Stagger starting at 7.00pm, Gateway, Kingsway and calling at the Royal Oak, Wilmslow Rd, 8.30.

Sunday 18th - Curry Crawl in Chorlton. Meet noon in the Beech, Beech Rd; 1.00pm Spread Eagle; 2.00 The Bar, Wilbraham Rd (opp. Safeway). Curry to follow.

Monday 19th - Two-way social in Portwood: 9.00pm Rifle Volunteer, Carrington Rd; 10.00 Midway, Newbridge La.

Thursday 29th - Pub of the Month presentation to the Crown, High St, Cheadle (see article on page 4).

Saturday 31st - Night out in Salford. Meet 7.00pm Old Pint Pot, Adelphi St/Crescent.

Monday 2nd September - Two-way social in Openshaw: 9.00pm Pack Horse; 10.00 Lord Raglan. Both Ashton Old Rd.

August 96

Friday 6th - New members social to Passageway Brewery. Phone 477 1973 to book.

High Peak branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple and all points north. They have advised us of the following events:

Sunday 4th - Woods Walk. Meet Rams Head, Disley, 9.45am. (The walk will include Lyme Park and Poynton).

Monday 12th - Monthly branch meeting at the Bowling Green, Stockport Rd, Marple. Starts 8.30pm.

Saturday 17th - 10 Boroughs Pub Crawl - a drink in each of the Metropolitan Boroughs of Greater Manchester. Meet Victoria Station at 10.15am.

Apart from Macclesfield and Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have advised us of the following events:

Monday 5th - Macclesfield pub crawl commencing 7.00pm Chester Road tavern, 7.30 Barnfield, 8.00 Bate Hall, 8.30 Castle.

Monday 19th - Monthly branch meeting at the Holly Bush, Bollington. Starts 8.00pm.

To Do Address Notepad Anniversary CAMRA 93 Planner

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THE Robinson's COLLECTION

BEST BITTER (4.2% ABV)
- pale and bright with a full bitterness derived from choice aroma hops.

FREDERICS (5.0% ABV)
- light and golden in colour and packed with flavour. Named after the brewery's founder. Also available in bottles.

XB (4.0% ABV)
- a smooth bitter ale with a malty taste. First brewed in the Lake District.

HATTER'S MILD (3.3% ABV)
- brewed from quality malt and hops, it's the best cask conditioned, light mild around.

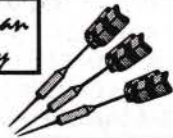
OLD STOCKPORT (3.5% ABV)
- rich golden body with a refreshingly hoppy taste and lightish alcohol content.

OLD TOM (8.5% ABV)
- smooth, dark and mellow. Brewed from a recipe almost as old as the brewery itself.

C H O I C E B E E R S

Fistful of Arrows

By Brian Carey



Have you ever watched the professional dart throwers on the box and said "I can throw as well as them"? Well, now you've got the chance to prove it.

George & Dragon landlord Terry Moores has booked Phil Taylor for an exhibition at the Heaton Chapel pub later this month. In case you didn't know of Taylor's reputation, let me enlighten you. Phil Taylor has been crowned world champion four times. He has won both the Embassy title, and the WDC crown. Before being banned from BDO events because of his connection with the WDC, he represented England and is, arguably, the best dart thrower in the world.

By the time you read this, Phil will probably be £12,000 better off, as he was favourite to take the WDC World Matchplay Championship at Blackpool earlier this month.

When he was only fifteen, the young Phil Taylor would challenge county players for money - and beat them. But then, inexplicably, he gave up the game.

Living in Stoke, it became almost inevitable that he would encounter the most famous dart player ever, a certain Eric Bristow. Phil and his wife attended an exhibition given by Bristow at his pub/club "The Crafty Cockney". Not one to hide his light under a bushel, Phil told Mrs Taylor that he could throw as well as that. Nothing more was said, until his birthday when she presented him with a set of arrows. The rest, as they are fond of saying, is history. Phil will be facing challenges from all comers at the George & Dragon, Manchester Road, Heaton Chapel, on Wednesday August 28th. A draw will be made to decide who will get the chance to play him. Get your name on the list as soon as possible. There will be prizes for the best attempts, but the most important thing will be to tell your grandchildren in twenty years time: "I played Phil Taylor in '96, they don't make dart players like that this century."

One local player who could have given even Phil Taylor a run for his money is Tony O'Shea. Unfortunately, the politics of darts means that if Tony as much as shows his face in the Dragon the night that Phil Taylor is there, Tony would risk his status as a BDO player. Taylor is one of the professionals who have formed their own association - the World Darts Council - and are consequently banned from entering BDO events like the Embassy or playing for their county or country. This situation has been going on for far too long and needs to be sorted out. It is darts and dart players who are suffering.

Another great character, who frequently pops up in the area, Bobby George, has issued a challenge to all pubs and clubs. Last year teams of dart players from all over the country raised over £47,000 to aid people suffering with learning disabilities. On September 27th it will happen again, but this year the target will be one hundred grand. The organisers are looking for around 1000 teams around the country, and with our area being so strong in darts, I see no reason why we shouldn't be well represented. This isn't just for players of Super League standard either. There will be prizes given for teams who raise most sponsorship, most money raised by teams in swear box (I can think of a few candidates locally for that one) and most 26's. The marathon will take place between 7pm and 11pm on the night, but closing date for entries (£10 per team) is September 6th. Incidentally, there is a prize for the most original team name. Teams can be male, female or mixed and consist of eight players. Contact me if you are interested on 0161 286 7762 and I will arrange for entry form to be sent to you.

SOUTHLANDS HOTEL & COPPERFIELDS BAR



- ★ FUNCTIONS
- ★ 29 BEDROOMS, 16 EN-SUITE
- ★ PUBLIC BAR
- ★ FREE HOUSE
- ★ TRADITIONAL BEERS

JOHN SMITHS BITTER 99p -SUPERB HOME-COOKED
5 Different Cask Ales FOOD LUNCHTIMES &
 Live Entertainment Saturdays EVENINGS

The Victoria

Hall Street, Offerton

Greenalls Mild & Bitter,
 Stones Bitter

All Cask Conditioned

BAR SNACKS AVAILABLE

Your Hosts

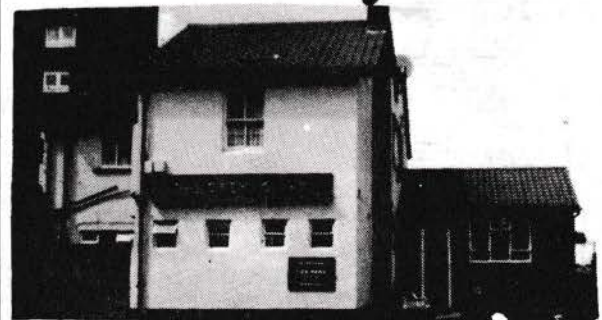
Ian & Christine

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Irene and Staff welcome you to
The Greyhound



Bowden Street, Edgeley
Boddingtons Mild & Bitter
and Ever Changing

Guest Beers
changed weekly

BINGO: MON & THURS afternoons SKY TV

A warm welcome Guaranteed

★ OPEN ALL DAY ★



Viaducts and Vaults 2 - The Stockport Pub Guide - Now Available - see page 10



Further to an item in last month's OT, we are sad to report the death of John McArt, former licensee of the *Grove* in Clayton. Our sympathy goes to Ann and all the family; John's best memorial will surely be the continuance of the *Grove* as a superb community pub.

A welcome increase in opening hours can be reported at the *Queens Head (Turners Vaults)* on Stockport's Underbank. The pub is now open all day on Sundays and will be serving food from 12-4.

One or two licensee changes in South Manchester to report. At the *Osborne House* in Rusholme we welcome Paul and Pat Hill while at the *Grafton* on Grafton Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Paul and Clare are the new faces behind the bar. Paul is in fact the brother of Diane, licensee of another Holts house, the *Old Monkey* on Portland Street in the City Centre.

A slightly belated welcome to Philip and Lorraine McDonald who have taken over as managers of the *Shady Oak* on Redford Drive in Bramhall. Last year, this pub was on the verge of entry into the Good Beer guide, but since then it seems to have suffered from a number of sort-term licensees. They are

offering the "Tapster's Choice" range of guest beers, and Philip has reduced the price of the guest beers from £1.69 to a more competitive £1.59, compared with £1.49 for the standard Tetley Bitter. Hopefully he will also be able to put pressure on the Allied-Domecq management to remove the fake handpump for keg Cidermaster which they have seen fit to impose on the place, so the pub can again offer an honest welcome to its customers.

Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries (Banks's to you and me) seem to have started the retreat from their generally disastrous foray into the East Manchester pub scene. On the market as we went to press were both the *Gorton Arms* in West Gorton and the *Star* in Ardwick. The asking price is £90,000 apiece.

The *Blarney Stone* on St Petersgate, Stockport was reported to be selling a house beer as we went to press.

Last month we reported that the *Comfortable Gill* on King Street West, Stockport, was getting a new licensee. Unfortunately we got his name wrong! So, apologies to Peter Belfield who is now settling in at the *Comfy* after a lengthy stint at the *Crown* in Heaton Moor

Coming Next Month

- ... guide to the revised Opening Times & CAMRA World Wide Web Sites
- ... review of huge Olympia Beer Festival

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STARTS WED 7TH AUGUST

MARBLE ARCH SUMMER FESTIVAL

TRADITIONALLY MANCHESTERS FINEST FREE HOUSE



SUMMER BREWS FROM AT LEAST A DOZEN BREWERIES AROUND THE COUNTRY
 CHOOSE FROM UP TO 15 DIFFERENT CHEESES IN OUR CHEESE FESTIVAL

EVENTS

BEER TASTING/TALK

Introducing German Wheat Beers & Belgian Fruit Beers
 Wed 7th August - free

EPICURIAN CLUB

Curry Night
 Wed 14th August - £3
 Chinese Night
 Wed 28th August - £4

SONS OF THE DESERT

(Laurel & Hardy Club)
 Wed 21st August

LIVE MUSIC

Sat 10th August - Wredd
 Sat 17th August - Monkey
 Sat 24th August - Jazz Chameleons
 Sat 31st August - Dimeterios

THE MARBLE ARCH INN, 73 ROCHDALE ROAD, MANCHESTER 4, PHONE 832 5914 FOR INFO.

MANCHESTER MATTERS

When OT published its roundup last month of the effect on City Centre pubs of June's terrorist bombing, we never thought to include a pub that had been closed for nigh on 10 years. Sadly, however, the old Castle & Falcon sustained considerable damage in the blast, and was demolished in mid-July on safety grounds.



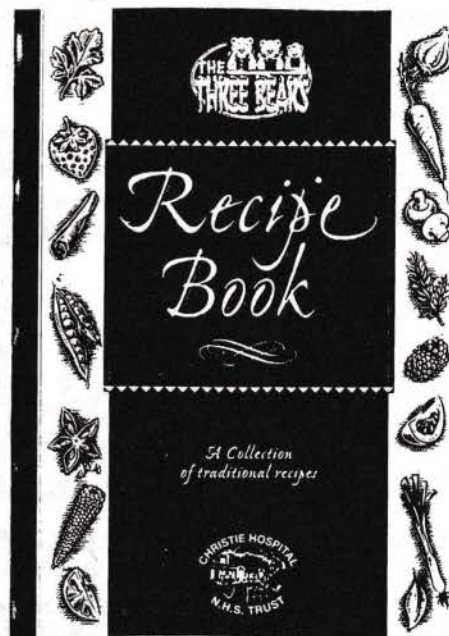
by Rhys Jones

Another "celebrity closure" hit the headlines last month, with the opening of Tommy Duck's Whisky Bar - not, alas, in the premises of the old Tommy Duck's, but as the latest renaming of the Britannia (more recently the Frog & Bucket) on Newton Street. A knicker collection to rival the old Tommy Duck's dangles from the ceiling, and over 100 whiskies are offered (including some rare single malts but also some truly repulsive-sounding "flavoured" concoctions - chocolate whisky, anyone?). Live entertainment features most evenings - an eclectic mix including Irish nights (currently Thursday), percussion sessions, and free jazz - and at lunchtimes the pub hosts the Sunflower Vegan cafe. While I thought the original Tommy Duck's, at least in its last year, was frankly overrated, this revival brings a refreshing change to a quiet area of the City. Sadly, though, the beer range is mundane - Tetley Bitter, Ruddles County, and Courage Directors on handpump. Meanwhile the Frog & Bucket name lives on at the former Carey's (before that a Yates's Wine Lodge) round the corner at New Cross (corner of Oldham Street and Great Ancoats Street); this has a similar range of real ales, but is now a comedy venue with door charge. Elsewhere in the Centre, Marstons Pedigree has replaced Robinsons Best Bitter at Bonapartes on Piccadilly Station - what a shame that this premier gateway, soon to see through trains from Paris and Brussels, now sells no draught beer from the Manchester region! Not too far away, and perhaps not to general surprise, Praguefive now sells no real ale.

In Longsight, the Gold Cup is now all keg, following difficulties in looking after the cask beer. There's better news from Gorton, though, where the Friendship is selling "Friendship Bitter" (3.5%) at £1 a pint. Available to Marstons pubs under a house

name, this is apparently a new development from the brewery (I've since seen the same beer under house names at the Kings Arms in Shaw and the Colliers Arms in Oldham). In the past I've been somewhat doubtful about similar efforts from, for example, Carlsberg-Tetley on the grounds that drinkers could be misled into thinking that beer is truly exclusive (or even brewed at, rather than for, the pub); in this case, though, the prominence of the Marstons logo on the pumpclip should hopefully help to make the true state of events a little clearer. In any event, it's a tasty drop, and well worth £1 of anybody's money.

Charity On The Menu



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The Three Bears on Jacksons Lane in Hazel Grove is gaining an enviable reputation for the quality and variety of its food. Licensees Kath and Dave Bailey have now collaborated with Mrs Stephenson of the well-known Stephenson's glassware firm to put together a very attractive book of recipes to be sold in aid of the Barbara Robinson Memorial Fund, which contributes towards the work of Christie Hospital. The 65 recipes cover starters, salads, main courses, sweets and biscuits and all sound very appetising. So far over £650 has been raised for the charity. The book sells for £1 and, as well as the Three Bears, will be going on sale at a number of other Robinson's pubs.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

(OT148)

I / We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S) DATE

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

SIGNATURE TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

I / We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: INDIVIDUAL £12 JOINT MEMBERSHIP £14

STUDENT or OAP or REGISTERED DISABLED £6

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ONLY £6

Steve McCarley, 32 Howden Close, North Reddish, Stockport

those wishing to join CAMRA who live in the Marple, Bredbury, Woodley or Romiley areas, should write instead to:

Tom Lord, 5 Vernon Drive, Marple, SK6 6JH.



BEER HOUSE

SUMMER FESTIVAL

**THURSDAY AUG 22 to
MONDAY AUG 26**



50 SUMMER ALES

PLUS CIDER & PERRY

SERVING IN TWO BARS

WEEKEND BARBEQUE

OPEN ALL DAY

FOOD SERVED ALL DAY

ALWAYS 12 REAL ALES ON OFFER including

BURTONWOOD BITTER, THEAKSTONS XB and BEST BITTER,
MOORHOUSES PENDLE WITCH + 8 EVER CHANGING GUEST BEERS
including GUEST MILD PLUS A RANGE OF TRADITIONAL CIDERS,
DRAUGHT BELGIAN KRIEK, LEFFE BLONDE, HOEGAARDEN &

MANY BOTTLED BELGIAN
and other FOREIGN BEERS

Lunchtime Food Served 7 Days A Week
TRY OUR SUNDAY BREAKFAST 12 - 2.30
EVENING MEALS SERVED 5 - 7 THURS & FRI
HALF PRICE MENU EACH MONDAY
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PARTY OR MEETING ROOM AVAILABLE FREE

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